

Higher Education, *HLRC*, Pandemics, and Racism

We are pleased to publish our first issue of 2020. These past several months have been challenging for higher education as well as the communities in which we live. On March 11, the World Health Organization officially designated the coronavirus as a pandemic. Since that time, there have been approximately 7.3 million cases and just over 400,000 deaths globally. The pandemic has significantly disrupted the global economy, and higher education has had to respond in novel ways to ensure social distancing to contain the spread of the disease. As a result, all levels of education moved online, with mixed results. For those universities that have deep experience in providing distance education, the pandemic signaled “business as usual” in terms of providing education. At many traditional universities that were not accustomed to online education, faculty and students faced significant challenges in quickly moving their curriculum online.

More recently, in the United States of America, the killing of George Floyd by police officers in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has sparked a level of national and international protests that many characterize as something different from previous protests. More younger people, and people of all races, have been out in the streets calling for change to systemic racism in the United States as well as in other countries. We have been seeing a rapidly growing dialog by those in higher education calling for changes to their systems and a renewed focus on how higher education can provide the leadership needed to make positive social change by combatting all forms of racism and discrimination. We at *Higher Learning Research Communications (HLRC)* join others in condemning racism in all of its forms and encourage authors to use *HLRC* as a platform for keeping this important conversation, specifically as it relates to higher education, alive.

HLRC is committed to promoting sound research and evidence-based solutions and perspectives. We strive to ensure that we can get timely information out quickly. The editorial in this volume, “COVID-19: Threat or Opportunity for Higher Education,” by Dimitrios Vlachopoulos, discusses the role of online education in a pandemic and is one example of our commitment to getting this information out now, when it is most needed. We have announced a call for papers related to COVID and higher education and will strive for quick turnaround times so that information is timely. Authors at any time are encouraged to submit essays, brief reports, and research articles on contemporary issues, such as COVID-19 and the uprisings against racism and how they impact higher education (and how higher education can impact resolution),

The past 6 months have been very busy for the *HLRC*. We have just recently moved journal hosting platforms. We are now hosted by bepress on ScholarWorks and join six other Walden University journals. Although such transitions are always more complicated than one thinks in the early planning stages, we are thankful to the Walden University library staff, journal administrators, and to bepress for helping us navigate the transition as smoothly as possible. Our new website is located at <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/hlrc/>.


We want to share some information as we move into our 10th year of the journal. We have completed our first 18 months being indexed by Scopus. The number of articles published in Scopus journals citing *HLRC* authors has increased significantly, which is evidence that Scopus is helping to increase exposure to *HLRC* authors. We started publishing manuscripts as they are accepted in 2017, and we continue that practice to ensure manuscripts get exposure as quickly as possible. Our journal acceptance rate is 40%. We are working to improve our social media presence and are on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. We are also working hard to

decrease the time from submission to acceptance, which is averaging under 3 months at this time. One of our challenges is similar to what many journals face—finding qualified peer reviewers who have time to complete manuscript reviews. Those who wish to serve as peer reviewers are encouraged to contact *HLRC* for more information. Finally, the work we have been investing in indexation and increasing social media presence is resulting in a steadier stream of quality manuscripts for review.

The *HLRC* editorial team is working hard to publish quality manuscripts that reflect contemporary topics in our areas of focus: higher education teaching and learning, workplace competency development, and higher education and the public good. We invite you to consider *HLRC* for your publishing needs.


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